



Health Department

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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**CDC/WHO Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) Health Alert
– Milwaukee Health Department Response**

Recently, state and local public health agencies nationwide including the City of Milwaukee Health Department have been alerted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO) of a global health alert involving cases of atypical pneumonia and what is being called “Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome” (SARS).

Over one hundred individuals in Southeast Asia including travelers to the area have contracted an illness that has been characterized by a rapid onset of respiratory distress including a severe form of pneumonia. In addition to deploying staff for investigation of this outbreak, the CDC is alerting public health agencies and clinicians to monitor and report suspected cases of illness immediately.

Today, the Milwaukee Health Department has responded to this request by electronically issuing “healthcare alerts” to community healthcare providers and other public health agencies in Milwaukee County via EMSysTM and its County Wide Communicable Surveillance Network (SURVNET). The Milwaukee Health Department has also requested that any suspected cases in Milwaukee County be reported immediately to SURVNET for follow-up and investigation.

The Commissioner of Health, Seth L. Foldy, M.D., will hold a press briefing on Sunday, March 16, 2003 at 1:00 PM at the Frank P. Zeidler Municipal Building, 841 N. Broadway (Market Street Entrance) to present Milwaukee Health Department activities associated with the CDC/WHO alert as well as to answer any questions.

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